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Atari Online News, Etc.
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    - * Net Neutrality Rules in Effect *-
    - * Facebook Scam Leads to Hijacking! *-
- * House Votes Permanent Ban on Web Access Tax *-

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->From the Editor's Keyboard           "Saying it like it is!"
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If the Chinese [allegedly] can hack into Federal computer networks and steal every Federal employees' personal information, what's the point of national security? And, no matter how safe we all think our computer is because of virus protection and good password protection, perhaps we're really not.

Granted, you and I are probably of no interest to the Chinese. We aren't federal employees, with potential important secret hidden information buried in our personal data file somewhere, but I think that you get my point. Something to think about!

Until next time...

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->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

Master of Orion Reboot Coming from The Team Behind World of Tanks

Master of Orion, the classic turn-based strategy game series dormant since for more then a decade, is back with better graphics and refocused gameplay thanks to an injection of developers and money by World of Tanks publisher Wargaming.

Wargaming purchased the rights to the Master of Orion property in 2013

during an Atari bankruptcy auction. Today, the company announced its plans to reboot Master of Orion, developing the first game in the series since 2003's Master of Orion 3.

While Wargaming originally made a name for itself with the science fiction strategy game Massive Assault, the company decided to bring on Argentinian-based NGD Studios to create the reboot with the help of key members from the original game's team.

Players can expect a revamped user interface, an orchestral score from the original game's composer, voiceovers by well-known actors, new user tutorials, according to the announcement.

"Master of Orion is a game that brings Wargaming truly back to its roots, not only as a company but also in how it influenced my personal interest in both games and making them," said Victor Kislyi, CEO of Wargaming. "The series' iconic gameplay has stood the test of time and working with NGD Studios to bring the series back to life is a truly exciting moment for the team."

Andr s Chilkowski, co-founder and CEO of NGD Studios, said the studio has made many improvements to the over all game, but that it retained its classic gameplay.

As with previous games in the series, players will manage colonies and populations; choose how much to focus on research, production, resources, military power; and race to be the first to conquer the stars.

The game will still allow players to win through conquest, diplomacy, technology or economy, according to Wargaming, and players will still have to worry over their civilization's morale, pollution, taxes and defenses. Random events and anomalies will add variety to gameplay as well.

When it's finished, the game will include the series' original races: Alkari, Bulrathi, Darlok, Human, Klackon, Psilon, Meklar, Mrrshan, Sakkra and Silicoids. There will also be six different ship classes for each race and the ability to customize a ship's missiles, engines, armor, shields, scanners, bombs and lasers. The game will include more than 75 future technologies with hundreds of advancements.

Kislyi said Wargaming was "more than willing to give a new lease of life" to Master of Orion back when the company purchased rights to the series.

Microsoft Beefs Up Xbox Ahead of Major E3 Event

Microsoft on Tuesday unveiled an Xbox One console with double the memory space that will hit the market as the Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) video game extravaganza gets under way next week.

The new Xbox One model boasts a terabyte of space that will likely appeal to players who are increasingly installing games as digital downloads instead of opting for disks.

Microsoft's move came amid rumors that rival Sony plans to show off a new one-terabyte PlayStation 4 at a media event slated to take place Monday evening before the E3 show floor opens the following morning.

"Since Xbox One launched, one of the most frequent requests from fans is to add more storage to their consoles," said Microsoft's Larry Hryb, who blogs for the Xbox team using the gamer name "Major Nelson."

He announced that Xbox One 1TB will be priced at \$399 when it begins shipping on June 16 to retailers in the United States and select markets.

Current model Xbox One consoles with 500 gigabytes of storage will remain \$349, which was a \$50 price cut that had been billed as temporary.

The new Xbox One will come with an improved controller, according to Hryb. Microsoft also said that later this year it will begin selling a \$25 adapter that will allow controllers to be used for Xbox-style play on personal computers powered by the coming Windows 10 operating system.

Hryb promised that Microsoft would show off a stellar line-up of Xbox games at E3 next week.

What To Expect from E3 2015

Calling the annual E3 conference a trade show is like calling "Top Chef" a bake sale. The most important video game event of the year is a convention in name alone, because in terms of sheer entertainment value, it is pretty much unrivaled.

The 2015 version of E3 short for the Electronic Entertainment Expo descends upon downtown Los Angeles next week, bringing with it a good 50,000 journalists, analysts, game makers, and retailers. For the first time in years, the industry event will invite 5,000 lucky fans to attend the three-day conference, a golden ticket to a Los Angeles Convention Center crammed to the gills with the latest and greatest in interactive entertainment. From blockbuster console games to low-key PC indies to barfy VR experiments, E3 has got it all.

So what should gamers expect from this year's show?

Big news from the Big Three.

That would be Sony, Microsoft and Nintendo, who have annually treated the show as a console war battleground. The cheap shots have softened a bit over the years, but in general, this is where you'll hear some of the biggest announcements from the console manufacturers.

Microsoft already unveiled their updated 1 TB Xbox One console, so the Redmond giant will focus on showing off blockbuster software like Halo 5, Rise of the Tomb Raider, Forza 6, and a new game in the Gears of War franchise. I wouldn't doubt Hololens making an appearance, either. Microsoft doesn't want to let a big press event go by without getting their fascinating AR/VR gadget some coverage.

Sony, meanwhile, has gone on record calling 2015 a little sparse for big exclusive PS4 games. We'll undoubtedly see plenty of Uncharted 4, due for a 2016 release. Also expect a big showing from ambitious interstellar adventure game No Man's Sky, currently the biggest exclusive PS4 game slated for 2015. The company's Project Morpheus headset will be out and about in a big way, and there's a decent chance the company will try to even the playing field with Microsoft by announcing a 1 TB PS4. My Hail

Mary wish? A showing by long lost action/adventure game The Last Guardian, though I've said that every year since 2009. A man can dream.

While Sony and Microsoft swat at each other, Nintendo does its own thing these days at E3. The company has opted out of the big press conference war and instead will broadcast an informative video on Tuesday morning. They know their fans and prefer to speak to them directly.

So what will they say? They'll say a lot about Mario Maker and Star Fox for the Wii U, a portable Animal Crossing game, the adorable Yoshi's Woolly World, and likely some frustrating but awesome news about new Amiibo figures. Because they always do that. What they won't do is just as notable, however. We apparently won't see The Legend of Zelda at this show. But we can always hope for the appearance of another big franchise. Metroid, maybe?

Big games from everyone else.

E3's not just about console wars. It's about games, and this year's crop looks stellar. Expect showings of post-apocalyptic internet breaker Fallout 4, high-profile shooters Star Wars Battlefront and Call of Duty: Black Ops III, dueling music games (again) Rock Band 4 and Guitar Hero Live, Ubisoft's heavy-hitting trio of Assassin's Creed: Syndicate, Tom Clancy's The Division, and Rainbow Six: Siege, over-the-top action game Just Cause 3, as well as hundreds more.

Small games, too.

You go to the Louvre to catch a glimpse of the Mona Lisa, but it turns out, there's a lot of other art there. Really good art. Great art, even. And E3's sort of the same thing.

While Halo and Uncharted will steal the big headlines, a billion independent developers will be on hand showing off games with smaller budgets but just as much heart. I'm excited to check out games like Wattam, The Flame in the Flood, Night in the Woods, Abzu, Salt and Sanctuary, and more.

Virtual insanity.

On the fence about virtual reality? Get ready to choose a side, because it's coming fast. VR gaming is expected to explode at E3 this year.

The Morpheus will be at the Sony booth, for sure, though it's time for Sony to show off more than just a handful of tech demos. We need to see what legit, fully-formed PS4 video games feel like in VR, and E3 is the place to show us.

After that impressive showing back in January, Microsoft's HoloLens has gamers curious. That Minecraft demo looked amazing—Creepers on my coffee table!—and you just know they're working on other cool gaming-related stuff for the device. E3 would be the perfect place to show it, though they'll likely keep it low-key so as not to take away from Halo. Unless they incorporate Halo into a demo? Hrm. Halolens?

Oculus, meanwhile, will be everywhere. The company has announced plans to show off its newly revealed, final retail version of the Rift headset, along with its quirky Oculus Touch controllers and a ton of games. They're the leading VR company for a reason—the tech just feels more advanced and sturdier than what most competitors are up to—but with

competition on all sides, Oculus needs to plant its flag at this show as the VR tech to beat.

At least they'll have one less VR tech to contend with. Valve's Vive VR, which I've yet to try but sounds amazing, isn't going to be there.

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A-ONE's Headline News
The Latest in Computer Technology News
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Court Says Net Neutrality Rules Will Go into Effect Friday

Rules that treat the Internet like a public utility and prevent companies from blocking or slowing down some online traffic will go into effect Friday after a federal appeals court refused to delay them.

A three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit said it won't postpone implementation of the net neutrality regulations even though AT&T, Verizon, and other companies are fighting against them. The panel said the United States Telecom Association, the plaintiffs in the case, did not satisfy the requirements for a stay.

The ruling is a setback for the industry, but the litigation will go on. The court accepted the Telecom Association's request to speed up the proceedings and asked the two sides to submit a schedule for briefing within two weeks.

Last February, the FCC agreed in a 3-2 vote to new rules that specifically prohibit service providers from blocking or slowing Internet traffic. To make sure the FCC has the authority to punish violators, the agency agreed to put Internet service in the same regulatory camp as the telephone and other utilities. That means providers would have to act in the "public interest" when supplying Internet service and refrain from "unjust or unreasonable" business practices.

The goal is to prevent Internet service companies like Verizon and AT&T from striking secret deals with content providers like Google, Netflix or Twitter to move their data faster and shutting out fresh competition.

Cable and wireless companies that provide much of the nation's bandwidth object to the rules. The lawsuit says the regulations are too onerous, violate federal law, and are arbitrary, and that the FCC didn't follow the proper procedure in creating the rules. U.S. Telecom says it has no problem following the regulations against blocking or slowing web traffic, but that the FCC said it's not fair to treat broadband like public utilities.

Consumer groups and smaller startups, however, have cheered the regulations because they say it will prevent broadband companies from manipulating traffic and charging Internet "tolls."

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Tom Wheeler said Thursday's decision is a huge win for consumers. The National Cable & Telecommunications Association said it is glad the review will be sped up and that it's glad the court will review the appeal.

U.S. House Votes for Permanent Ban on Internet Access Taxes

The House of Representatives voted on Tuesday to permanently bar U.S. states from taxing Internet access and replace a 17-year-old temporary ban that had been extended multiple times and was due to expire on Oct. 1.

The bipartisan measure, passed by voice vote, also bans discriminatory taxes on e-commerce.

"This legislation prevents a surprise tax hike on Americans critical services this fall," said the bill's sponsor, Republican House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte.

A similar bill introduced in the U.S. Senate has 49 co-sponsors, including 11 Democrats, likely enough to secure passage.

But the House's "Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act" fails to address thorny questions over state sales taxes on goods and services sold via the Internet.

Currently, 45 states have imposed sales taxes on online purchases, but only some states require e-tailers to actually collect these revenues from customers.

Brick-and-mortar retailers have pushed for years for legislation that ensures full and consistent collection of online sales taxes in all 45 states. They argue that the current, patchwork system gives many online merchants a pricing advantage over traditional stores that must, under law, collect taxes from customers.

Online shoppers are supposed to submit payment for tax due, but almost no one does. As a result, many online purchases are effectively tax-free and cheaper than in-store purchases.

A House Judiciary Committee aide said lawmakers were working on a proposal to address the sales tax issue but declined to provide further details.

Facebook Scam Leads to Browser Hijacker

If you're meandering through Facebook and come across a link to an unexpectedly racy photo, it might be best to stay away, as antivirus-software company Bitdefender warns on its Hot for Security blog. That saucy picture may be bait meant to lure you down a rabbit hole to malware, or to unwanted software that can hijack your Web browser.

In this case, it all started with a very clickable photo of a woman's bare behind posted to a friend's wall, which also would have had 20 of your mutual friends tagged in the post, though the scam software may have

tagged them without their consent. The photo appeared to link to a pornographic video.

Those who took the bait are redirected to a URL of questionable intent. That page appeared to be a YouTube video, giving victims some false glimmer of hope that the video they clicked for was actually out there. Then, though, they'd have had to click through one more time, just to be told that access to the content of their desire required a Chrome browser plugin named mithv1.

That plugin, which Google has removed from the Chrome Web Store, was posing as an extension for Internet security, purportedly built to encrypt traffic and "unblock websites." Those who installed it may have had their browsers hijacked, a remedy for which can be found here.

Browser hijackers are becoming an epidemic for a couple of reasons: They're often legal, with big-name companies backing their development and distribution; and they work on Macs as well as Windows PCs. That doesn't make them any less annoying or frustrating.

Facebook-based scams are nothing new. While each can be taken down, Facebook has few means to prevent them from going up in the first place, especially if they immediately link to external websites. As on the rest of the Web, be careful what you click on in Facebook.

Hackathons Take on Islamic State in Cyberspace Battle

In a small room close by the Sydney Opera House, 60 people representing a vast range of communities and industries are working feverishly to come up with ways to combat the Islamic State group's online propaganda machine.

The extremists' ideology and use of social media has struck a chord with thousands of youngsters across the world, drawing them to fight in Iraq and Syria or show support from their home countries.

The United States and its allies have struggled to counter the digitally savvy group, but a pair of Silicon Valley entrepreneurs are leading a grassroots-charge to take on IS in cyberspace, travelling around the world to host hackathon challenges.

The latest hackathon competition - the fourth in the past five months - is being held alongside a two-day countering violent extremism conference in Australia's biggest city, attended by high-level officials and experts and opened by Prime Minister Tony Abbott.

The anti-extremism meeting is taking an in-depth look at how IS - which controls large swathes of territory in Iraq and Syria - reaches out to youths, with technology giants Facebook, Twitter and Google joining the more than 30 participating countries in hashing out solutions.

Almost 25,000 foreign fighters from over 100 countries were involved in jihadi conflicts worldwide, a recent United Nations report said, with many headed for Iraq and Syria. Some of those making the journey include teenage boys and girls.

The hackathon is designed to take an additional approach to countering IS.

"We marry innovation and the national security sector, with Silicon Valley ethos and start-up models to try and create very new, fast-paced, high-energy (projects)," said hackathon organiser Quintan Wiktorowicz, who was US President Barack Obama's senior adviser for countering violent extremism from 2011 to 2013.

"No single prototype is a silver bullet to stop ISIS radicalisation. But it's the ecosystem that we're building by running these (hackathons) globally and connecting the networks all the time," he told AFP, using another term for IS.

"Over five years, it can be a game changer, it can have strategy impact."

The projects being developed do not have to address radicalisation head on, but are meant to focus on the root causes of why young people choose to leave home, such as feeling disconnected from local communities.

Hackathon competitors are drawn from across industries and communities that may not normally interact with each other, with a goal to go beyond the talking shop labels usually slapped on conferences and come up with concrete programmes that can turn a profit.

At a three-day "Haqqathon" - a variation on the word hackathon using the Arabic word "haqq", which means truth - in Abu Dhabi in April, the people's choice award went to "Marhubba", an app which helps young Muslims tap into Islamic scholarship to answer questions about sex and intimacy.

Yassmin Abdel-Magied (C), a drilling engineer, works with Matthew Quinn (R), a counter-terrorism specialist to create an app called "Connect Me" that is described as a "Tinder for mentorship"

Silicon Valley entrepreneur Shahed Amanullah, who co-founded start-up incubator Affinis Labs with Wiktorowicz, said IS was "speaking to a vacuum that exists in Muslim youth identity".

"It's giving them an exciting, empowering path to express their identity. We are not doing that on our side," Amanullah said.

"We can't just say what they are doing is not Islam, we have to say what is Islam and explain that in a way that makes them feel good."

Yassmin Abdel-Magied, a drilling engineer, was working with Matthew Quinn, a counter-terrorism specialist and animator Caitlin Bathgate to create an app called "Connect Me" that she describes as a "Tinder for mentorship".

Like the online dating app Tinder, Abdel-Magied, 24, is hoping strangers can forge links based on their interests.

At the same desk, Abdullahi Alim, 22, who has a background in finance and statistics, is working with his team on a social media campaign called "Extreme Heroes".

"We're looking to give young Muslim teens who don't have a positive or an active Muslim role model in their life access to non-violent male leaders in their own community to give them a constructive identity," Alim said.

Results of the Sydney hackathon, which could include potential funding to develop projects, were due to be announced later Friday.

Anne Aly, an Australian counter-terrorism expert and hackathon co-organiser, is passionate about developing grassroots measures away from governments' top-down anti-terrorism narratives.

"I think showing the world, and Australia and the region, that we can bring civil society together to come up with solutions is in itself a very strong message," Aly said.

Google Now Has Just Gotten Insanely Better, and Very Freaky

For many people, Google Search is the only way to search the web for relevant information about all sorts of topics, and the company has constantly improved it to offer more accurate and better tailored answers. In fact, the company just announced a terrific new feature that makes Google Now even more useful than before. And very freaky.

According to Android Police, Google announced at an event in Paris a Location Aware Search feature that can answer a new set of questions, without the user having to ask questions that should include addresses or proper place names.

Asking Google Now questions like what is this museum? or when was this building built? in proximity of the Louvre in Paris will get you answers about the Louvre, as Google will be able to use your location and understand what you meant by this or this building .

The feature might not always work, and it ll be a while until Google can answer more complex questions, but it looks like Google s Location Aware Search feature is already available to users in the U.S. and other countries according to this Reddit thread.

Here are some of the new questions Google Search and Google Now can answer:

What is this museum?
When does this restaurant open?
How tall is this? (when standing next to a tower)
When was this built? (for monuments)
What s the name of this church?
What s the phone number for this pharmacy?

Good News: Even 8-year-old Macs Can Run The Latest Version of OS X

Apple on Monday unveiled OS X El Capitan, its next major update for Macs. The OS brings several performance improvements and new features to the desktop, and Mac users will be able to install it on MacBooks, iMacs and other OS X computers as soon as this summer when the first OS X 10.11 beta will be released. But what are the system requirements for running El Capitan?

The list of El Capitan compatible Macs includes the following models:

iMac (Mid-2007 or newer)

MacBook (13-inch Aluminum, Late 2008), (13-inch, Early 2009 or newer)
MacBook Pro (13-inch, Mid-2009 or newer), (15-inch, Mid / Late 2007 or newer), (17-inch, Late 2007 or newer)
MacBook Air (Late 2008 or newer)
Mac Mini (Early 2009 or newer)
Mac Pro (Early 2008 or newer)
Xserve (Early 2009)

When it comes to system requirements, the blog says that the better the hardware, the smoother the experience users should get. As long as your Mac has a 64-bit CPU, you should be able to run El Capitan, OS X Daily says, adding that beyond that, the requirements are pretty soft and forgiving.

However, Apple is focusing this year on making OS X run even smoother on older devices than previous releases, just like it does with iOS 9 for iPhones and iPads.

Twitter Removing 140-Character Limit from Direct Messages

Twitter has been overhauling Direct Messages over the past several months, and today it's announcing an enormous change: plans to lift the classic 140-character limit. Starting in July, DMs will seemingly be able to run as long as you'd like, turning it into much more of a typical instant message and group chat service.

It's a sensible move — the 140-character limit was always more of a nuisance in DMs, since they're private and not meant to be the same type of quick info bite as a tweet. It'll also be a huge help to companies that run customer service on Twitter. Twitter has already made it easier for companies to do that by giving them the option to let anyone initiate a DM, and now they'll be able to send long messages back and forth, rather than being arbitrarily restricted.

Twitter traditionalists don't have to worry much: You may be wondering what this means for the public side of Twitter, writes Sachin Agarwal, Twitter's DM product manager. Nothing! Tweets will continue to be the 140 characters they are today.

Two Men Arrested After Sending Threatening Emoji over Facebook

Arrested by Spartanburg County deputies in South Carolina earlier this month, 29-year-old David Fuentes and 29-year-old Matthew Cowan were taken into custody for sending threatening messages through Facebook to an unnamed man. However, no words were transmitted through the Facebook messaging, only graphical emoji icons.

Specifically, the duo both sent the emoji for a fist, a hand pointing in the shape of a gun and an image of a white ambulance. Allegedly, the intention of the images indicated that the two men were planning on beating up the unnamed man and potentially sending him to the hospital in an ambulance.

Of course, this wasn't the only incident that led to the arrest of

Fuentes and Cowan. An incident report filed during May 2015 indicated that the Fuentes and Cowan attempted to assault the unnamed man at his home. The emoji messages were basically the final straw that led deputies to arrest the two men and charge both with stalking charges. Both men now face up to five years in prison if convicted of the charges.

Speaking about the increased use of social media in investigations, Lt. Kevin Bobo of the Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office encouraged parents to educate themselves on the symbols their kids are using and also monitor that use.

This isn't the first case of emoji playing a significant role in an arrest. During January 2015, 17-year-old Osiris Aristy was arrested by the NYPD after publishing several Facebook messages with multiple gun emojis pointing to a policeman emoji. That was in combination with written threats within his series of threatening Facebook messages. When Aristy was eventually arrested, police found a .38 caliber Smith and Wesson firearm in his home as well as an amount of pot exceeding 25 grams, likely packaged for distribution.

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